



2011 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

Policies and Procedures

Planned Tasks for 2011:¹

- Upgrade Region 5 Training and Professional Development Program to focus on EEO and Labor and Employee Relations issues, policies, and basic supervision training to enable a more fair and consistent regional approach.

Accomplishments Narrative:²

Office of Civil Rights (OCR):

OCR conducted Sexual Harassment Prevention and Reasonable Accommodation training during FY 2011. 90% of the Region 5 managers attended the Sexual Harassment Prevention training. 53% of the Region 5 managers attended the Reasonable Accommodation training. The Region will develop a periodic training calendar in these areas, to include participation from managers and non-managers.

Human Capital Office (HCO):

HCO developed two training courses (Conduct & Discipline and Clarity in Supervision) and made them available on the supervisory portal. A third course (Performance Management) was developed and will be placed on the portal in multiple segments. A fourth course (Formal Discussions) was developed and is expected to be posted on the portal in the near future. During the next cycle, HCO will assess the usefulness of "brown bag" discussions with supervisors, in addition to making courses available on the portal.

¹ To be filled out and submitted to OCR by May 13, 2011

² To be filled out and submitted to OCR by October 14, 2011



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Complaints Processing and Procedures

Planned Tasks for 2011:¹

- Reduce timeline for completion of all processes, including final decisions, relating to grievances, adverse actions and administrative actions (suspension proposals, et.al.) by at least 50%.
- Review and complete trend analysis for EEO cases and Reasonable Accommodation requests.

Accomplishments Narrative:²

Office of Civil Rights (OCR):

The average processing time for informal EEO cases in FY 2010 was 88 days while the average processing time in FY 2011 was 32 days, a reduction of 64%. OCR will meet with the Region's EEO Counselors to determine and work to eliminate the barriers to completing all informal processing in a timely manner.

In addition to timeliness, OCR examined several other parameters of the Region's EEO cases that began in FY 2010 and FY 2011, such as the bases of complaints and the alleged issues. Based on these data, OCR will continue to work with managers through guidance, training, and education to address the cause of complaints and minimize future complaints. This training will include how to communicate effectively with employees regarding EEO issues, including reasonable accommodations.

OCR completed a review of the Region's Reasonable Accommodation requests for FY 2010 and FY 2011. During that period, employees made forty-seven requests, resulting in only two denials. In total, thirty-three requests have completed the interactive process. The evaluated parameters included the number of reasonable accommodation requests (forty-seven), the approval (thirty-one) and denial (two) of such requests, and the processing time and monetary cost each request incurred. Based on these data, the Region will determine how to best address Reasonable Accommodation requests in a fair and timely manner.

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Complaints Processing and Procedures

Human Capital Office (HCO):

Owing to a lack of a complete grievance database and lack of available baseline data, it was difficult to determine the total length of time for resolution of all grievance actions and to identify "bottlenecks" in the process. Hence, in FY 2011, HCO implemented a formal tracking system so that it could accurately track statistics, evaluate the data, and streamline the process.

In addition, four enhancements were implemented including: A) Increase in the number of experienced Labor Relations (LR) staff; B) Training of all LR staff to fully utilize the new tracking system; C) Establishment of Standard Operating Procedures to reduce processing time; and D) Promotion of mutually collaborative relationships to improve communications between LR staff and labor attorneys.

During the next reporting cycle, the Region will be able to evaluate the baseline data and determine which processes are working and which processes may need to be discontinued.



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Special Emphasis Programs and Outreach

Planned Tasks for 2011:¹

- Complete pilot year of EPA sponsored Science Colloquium with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) by September 30, 2011 and propose program for FY 2012.
- Employ two MAI faculty fellows/IPA or consultancy during summer 2011.

Accomplishments Narrative:²

Human Capital Office (HCO):

During the 2010-2011 school year (FY 2011), the Region and Northside College Prep High School (NCP), part of Chicago Public Schools, began a project that joined 40 NCP students with 25 Regional employees. Students learned about EPA careers, the role of the EPA in environmental protection, and how to be good environmental stewards. 95% of the students surveyed rated the experience highly. In January of 2012, the Region will continue the project with NCP as well as start a similar project with Walter Payton College Preparatory High School.

Office of Civil Rights (OCR):

The Region acquired two Faculty Fellows during FY 2011 from Minority Academic Institutions (MAI). One position was in the Land and Chemicals Division (LCD) and the other position was in the Superfund Division (SFD). For FY 2011, the Region's investment for the MAI Fellows was \$27,944.00.

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Disability Program

Planned Tasks for 2011:³

- Expand outreach to organizations to encourage application for federal employment with the goal of increasing the hiring percentage of disabled persons/veterans.

Accomplishments Narrative:⁴

Office of Civil Rights (OCR):

The Region teamed up with the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide training to four disabled veterans, who were part of the Non-Paid Work Experience Program. The Region hired three of these trainees after they completed their internships.

OCR established a partnership with CALOR Inc., a recruitment resource for persons with disabilities. In order to facilitate recruitment of persons with disabilities, OCR provided CALOR with copies of all of the Region's vacancy announcements and assistance with navigating the USAJOBS website.

Through the Region's continued partnership with the Illinois Rehabilitation Services Office (IRSO), the Region attended a job fair that targeted persons with disabilities. As a result of networking at the fair, the Region gained direct access to a pool of applicants with disabilities through the website of AbilityLinks, Inc., as well as the ability to share vacancy announcements and review résumés.

Human Capital Office (HCO):

HCO continues to communicate with all program divisions and use training and education to emphasize and promote the importance of equality throughout the hiring process, particularly involving persons with disabilities and veterans.

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Diversity and Workplace Best Practices

Planned Tasks for 2011:¹

- Outreach and participation in Minority Academic Institute (MAI) Job Fairs to enhance minority recruitment, especially with respect to Hispanic recruitment.
- Promote and participate in commemorative observances, cultural awareness and Special Emphasis Programs.

Accomplishments Narrative:²

Office of Civil Rights/Human Capital Office (OCR/HCO):

During FY 2011, Regional staff attended eighteen job fairs. Fourteen of these fairs were held at MAIs, including eight that were outside of the Region.

In FY 2011, the Region hired sixteen students from MAIs for its Summer Intern Program. The Region will put out solicitations for students who attend MAIs within the Chicago area to pursue internships in the Winter of 2012, provided funds are available.

The Region attended a Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement job fair and gathered sixteen résumés from MAI students.

In addition to job fairs, the Region had individual meetings with twenty-five MAI students regarding the 2012 Honors Attorney Fellowship. Thirteen of those students applied for this fellowship.

The Region celebrated monthly events for all Special Emphasis Program (SEP) and Diversity Program groups. To encourage participation, these events included speakers on SEP topics. Events that had meals were better attended. OCR continues to work with SEP Managers to attract more participation through better planning.

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